
Bí Cineálta Policy



Burriscarra Primary School

Carnacon,
Ballyglass,
Claremorris,
Co. Mayo.

Principal: Helena Hastings
Deputy Principal: Ms. Marie Prendergast

Burriscarra N.S.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Burriscarra N.S. has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of Bí Cineálta:

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024.

The Board of Management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour. We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature.

Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures. Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

- Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm
- The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour
- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society

- It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour

The harm can be:

- Physical (e.g. personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- Social (e.g. withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- Emotional (e.g. low self-esteem, depression, anxiety)

□ A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour.

However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour
- Some students with special educational needs, may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control
- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Types of Bullying

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directly bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+, physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

Bullying can be: Direct

- Physical

- Verbal
- Written
- Extortion

Bullying can be: Indirect

- Exclusion
- Relational

Online Bullying Behaviour:

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This can include:

- Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above
- Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
- Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date Consulted	Method of Consultation
--	----------------	------------------------

School Staff	November/December 2024	Informed staff members of the new Bí Cineálta policy and what it entailed Gathered ideas that could be used for our own policy. Made staff aware of relevant changes to the new policy. Half day closure on 31st of March to put together Bí Cineálta Policy.
Students	March 2025	Students were given a child friendly questionnaire to seek their input in developing the new Bí Cineálta policy. Their wording, examples and suggestions were all taken into account when developing this policy.
Parents	March 2025 May 2025	Parents were given a questionnaire to seek their input in developing the new Bí Cineálta policy. Parents were reminded who to talk to if they have an issue. Parents made aware where to find the new Bí Cinealta policy on the school website
Board of Management	April 2025	BOM Meeting – reviewed new policy
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date Policy was approved:		

Date Policy was last reviewed:

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):
--

Culture and Environment:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour● Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated● Positive relationships● Effective leadership● Positive culture and environment which<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity- Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment- Promotes respectful relationships across the school community● Promote the concept of a trusted adult – Stay Safe linkage – who to tell● Create safe spaces in our school building and yard - visibility● Safe physical access● Supervision● opportunities to participate in class and whole school activities to raise self - esteem |
|---|

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying● Child friendly Ant-Bullying Policy was formed with pupil and parent input● Stay Safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour● Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils |
|---|

Curriculum:

- Teaching and learning in SPHE
- RSE Curriculum
- Student participation
- SPHE Methodologies
- Promoting inclusion and diversity
- Extra - curricular activities to develop positive self – worth
- Group work/ Collaboration
- Role - play, acting out scenarios
- Circle time
- Morning meetings
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school
- Acknowledgement of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, etc
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta policy

Policy and Planning:

- Bí Cineálta policy
- Student friendly Bí Cineálta policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Supervision
- RSE Policy
- SSE Wellbeing in education
- Appropriate CPD
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour
- Acceptable Use policy, Code of Behaviour, SEN policy

Relationships and partnerships:

- Strong interpersonal connections
- Bullying awareness initiatives
- Student and parent participation
- Critical thinking Skills
- Promoting peer support
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience

Preventing cyber bullying behaviour: Technology has provided many positive opportunities for education. Technology is a part of life that can impact children of all ages. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

Schools should proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Implementing the SPHE programme
- Teach children about responsible online behaviour
- Having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- Developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- Promoting or hosting online safety events for parents
- Holding an Internet Safety talk to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. Therefore, technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account

Preventing homophobic/ transphobic bullying behaviour

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender-stereotypes
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, and to encourage communication with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all student have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contribution of all students
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home
- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

Preventing sexual harassment:

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Schools must make it clear that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter. Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following:

- using the updated SPHE specifications at primary level to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- promoting positive role models within the school community

- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

Effective Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils:

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Staff members have a distinct responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils in class is effective and consistent.
- Supervision in playground areas are managed and conducted effectively, including when children arrive and leave school. Children are told where to play when out at yard and what spaces to avoid
- Office, Ancillary staff, SNAs and Bus Drivers are well placed to inform if any behaviour which may constitute bullying is noticed
- Children are accompanied by at least one staff member on school trips

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and Practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible

Supports for Staff:

- Regular discussion and review of policy and procedures is essential to support staff on a continuous basis
- All staff have a uniform interpretation of what is expected in relation to bullying, how to identify possible bullying behaviours , how to manage disclosures and how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying within the classroom context
- Staff are aware that supporting one another if a key aspect of prevention and new/inexperienced members of staff must be given every opportunity to discuss concerns and model best practice

Consistent recording , investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); Bí Cineálta standardised documentation is used to record all allegations and investigations.

On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:

- The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form on Aladdin
- The DLP/DDLP will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased
- All staff will be vigilant of bullying behaviour
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of bullying

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

Identifying if Bullying has occurred

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Two staff members can be present when engaging with children individually initially without parents' notification and presence
- Two staff members can be present when engaging with a group of children to investigate what happened. Teacher's discretion can be used with this approach about when best to use it
- A group meeting will provide the opportunity for the children to give their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident. The following three questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred:
 1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
 2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
 3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where Bullying Behaviour has occurred:

School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour. The school's Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the student friendly policy should clearly explain what actions will be taken when bullying behaviour is reported.

Requests no action taken:

A student who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just "look out" for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the

matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the behaviour. It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare. Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school. However, schools may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

Determining if the bullying behaviour has ceased:

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. Factors to consider in the review include:

- the nature of the bullying
- the effectiveness of strategies use to address the bullying behaviour
- the relationship between the students involved

Ongoing supervision of both the child experiencing bullying behaviour and the child displaying bullying behaviour may be required, as well as, continued support. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred. If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and school.

Recording bullying behaviour:

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The following details should be included on the record:

- form (see section 2.5 of Bí Cineálta procedures)

- type (see section 2.7 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- where and when (if known)
- the date of initial engagement with the students and their parents
- the views of the students and their parents* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (*only in relation to their own child)
- when review takes place, it should be noted if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and parents in relation to this
- note the date of reviews and engagements
- note the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- any engagement with external services/ supports should also be noted
- if a SSF exists for a pupil involved, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file

Complaint process:

If a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school complaints procedure.

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, then school can deal with it in accordance with Bí Cineálta policy.

It is important for staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. Engage with the student who is experiencing bullying without delay. School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties.

Supporting Bullied Pupils:

- ending the bullying behaviour
- fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils
- fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils
- indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes
- indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
- helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills

Supporting Bullying Pupils:

- making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished, get a 'clean sheet' and a fresh start
- making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this
- helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills
- using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth
- in dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child

It is important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken. The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- ensure the child experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved
- listen to the view of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

Parents of both parties involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy. In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman of the Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)